

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, November 10. 1691.

We lately receiv'd a Letter, as we suppose from a Lady, the Contents whereof are as follows :

GENTLEMEN,

" You have taught the Men how to Court the Women, pray be so kind as to Teach us Women how to Behave our selves to the Men, in Answer to the following Questions —

Quest. 1. Is it proper for a Woman to yield at the first Address, tho' to a Man we love?

Answ. We must first Answer the Letter, before we dispatch the Questions — For the Men, they are such poor helpless Creatures, that they much more need Direction in this Affair than the Fair Sex, whom Nature has sufficiently instructed with Wit, as well as Arm'd with Beauty, and so provided against all Attacks of what Nature soever. But if you think, Madam, you are not yet upon the Square with us, and if the pretty (for ought we know) invisible *Armillarys* won't enter the Lists with that dreadful Creature *Man*, unless she's Arm'd Back and Breast, we must not be such Un courteous Knights to refuse our Aid and Assistance therein to her or any other distressed Damsel.

Accordingly we Answer to this first Question — There's no such *want of Men* yet, thanks to our gentle French and Irish Enemies, that you Ladies should be in such great haste to yield at the first Appearance of a Foe — What if you are Cowards at Heart, (as Mrs. Rayfin in her Breeches) 'tis however decent not to hang out the *White Flag* 'till the *Cannon be drawn down*; besides, you'll get better Conditions if the Enemy does not know how weak you are within. (Forgive Ladies all this *Warlike Gibberish*, for we had been just reading the *Gazet*, and can't easily get out on't.) But to be less figurative, in plain Truth and English, as we have often told you, there's little *Faith in us Men*, and perhaps less Generosity, and but very few of us can bear such a Favour — Tis e'n too luscious Fare, as was said before of Kisses, for a hungry Lover, who ten to one will Surfeit upon't, and in a little while nauseate the Giver, Feast and all : Not but that cou'd the Ladies be sure of their Lovers Hearts, that will whip ye about like *Jack-a-Lents*, a Mile in a Minute, cou'd ye but know your Man once, and had you the good Fortune to light upon a *Generous Lover*, (as great a Phoenix as the *Eel* among the Sack of Snakes, &c. — you know the Story) in such a Case the less Ceremony the better, (except the grand one of the Ring, and Sack-posset) and he must be proportionably the better as he is the happier Lover, being surpriz'd into Bliss, and the mighty Joy heapt upon him before he's aware on't : And besides, all the World knows, as well as Seneca, that a Benefit is so much the greater by how much the more unexpectedly and speedily 'tis conferr'd. All the Fear here Ladies, is, least Love should put a Cheat upon you, infect you with his own Blindness, and make you take the Lovers for as errant Angels as they do you, and be perhaps both alike mistaken. However 't's other side we look upon to be much the safer, as the World now is, and that twou'd do best to keep the Hounds at a Bay for some convenient time, which will make 'em more eager, and when they do fassion more in earnest. But for this piece of the Art of Love, as is before said, we believe Women need little instruction, since tho' you were all as Innocent as Eve in Paradise, you'd have the Wit to Answer your Lovers as she did our great Grandfather, who even before she knew she was Naked cou'd tell Adam, unless Mr. Dryden flanders her — *You long should Court, and we should long Deny.*

Quest. 2. If our Lovers Sing to us, whether we ought to Praise 'em.

Answ. There seems no great matter in't of one side or t'other — but o'sh' two 'tis more Civil to Praise 'em

than otherwise, since if they sing Well you ought to do it out of Gratitude, if Ill out of Pity, if not Justice too ; since if they know it themselves, you are still the more Oblig'd to 'em, when they have so much Complaisance to expose even their own Imperfections to gratifie your desires. O' t'other side, if they have a little of the Sir Courtey in 'em, and think to stop the Fair Thief that has trul'sd up a certain little foolish Heart of theirs, and run away with it ; if they think to stop it with their own howling Hue and Cry, and perswade themselves that they sing like Bowman himself, when perhaps they Sing and Dance too like the Witches in *Macbeth*, or Scaramouch à Serenading his Mistress — in this Case we think most of all a good Humour'd Lady wou'd Commend 'em ; for 'tis the only Kindness Nature has shown the poor Creatures, to give 'em a good Opinion of their own pretty Parts, for fear if they knew their true Character as well as others do, they shou'd hang themselves out of the way — But then for the Way of Praising, which the greatest Wits, and those who have done it best, tell us, is the Nicest thing in the World — and this, Ladies, you know how to do the best of any. That way of Praising a Lover, which would please him best, is letting him take his own Commendation and Reward at once from that pretty Mouth which can no way more obligingly Praise him — or if the poor Icarus must not rise so high, (for fear of melting his Wings) a soft grasp of a fine Hand, a twirl of the Eye, a turn of the Head, and a thousand other pretty insignificant Nothings, which you Women call Favours, will be sufficient to make the happy Lover believe you are pleas'd with him, and almost set him out of his little Wits for Joy.

Quest. 3. What is the handsomest way of putting off a Lover?

Answ. Were it not more for the Ladies sake than the Lovers, we'd not meddle with this Question ; for we think 'tis as desperate a piece of Service as for the Garrison of a Fort to act its way thro' an Enemy's Army. In a word, 'tis almost an impossible thing for a Lady so to deny a Lover as to please him — for as 'tis wittily said of a very Ingenious Person in the Case of Rivals — *We are all Ishmaelites to one another if a Woman's in the Case* ; so ten to one but a Lady gets an Enemy when she refuses a Lover — who is generally so unreasonable an Animal, that he does not consider, *One poor Woman can suffice at once but for one Man* ; Whereas if a Fam'd Beauty, or Fortune, she can never content all Pretenders — unless she had as many Bodies as she has Faces when she looks in a Multiplying-Glass. But tho' a Woman of Prudence can't satisfie her Lovers, she may her self, by doing what becomes her, however they resent it. Our Advice then for her Behaviour is — as to the swarm of Fools that buzz about her, e'n to let 'em alone to pretend on, since they think too well of themselves to believe she scorns or refuses 'em, tho' they were ne'r so often told so by her own Mouth. — But if there be any Person of Sense, Generosity and true Worth, who appears to be really in Love with her, when her Heart is before engag'd, we think she'd do very handsomly to let him know as much in as Obliging Terms as possible, that he might as soon as he cou'd, wean himself from a *Fruitless Amour*.

Quest. 4. How shall we most decently give out Consent in Marriage?

Answ. For the Time, what has been said of Widdows, may be partly apply'd to't, as well as what has been said in Answer to the first Question. For the manner, there are a Thousand, which a witty Woman cannot be to seek in, and whatever way 'tis done, a Passionate Lover will scarce find fault with't : However, the less formal 'tis, we think it the better — the more unexpectedly, the more frankly 'tis done, the more Obliging it must needs be.

And thus much in Answer to the Lady's Questions concerning the Treatment of a Lover.

Quest. 5. Suppose a Man and Woman were shut up in a room together, who had never seen nor heard of the difference of Sexes before, how dye think they'd behave themselves? — would they —

Answ. In Answer to this hasty Question, which had almost over-run us, had we not tript up its heels — We say — that we don't know what to say. We are very unwilling to send the Ladies to *Daphnis* and *Chloe* for Information — that Book is too waggish in some places, and not spiritual enough for 'em: As for the *Tempest*, that don't come up to the Question, tho' *Mirande* and *Hypolito* are pretty fair for't, who had never seen, tho' they had heard of *Man* and *Woman*. — Well then, there's no Remedy but we must fall a guessing, but promise to do it as far from the Truth and as Civilly as possible — Why what should they do but fall a *Purring upon one another*, for *Nature* woud work, and then do the self same that we use to do when we were Children, make *Dirt-pies* together, be very *Inquisitive* and very *Innocent*, and share in one another's *Bread and Butter*, 'till they know how to employ their time better.

Quest. 6. Whether Fondness after Marriage is more pardoned in a Man or Woman?

Answ. 'Tis silly enough in both — and besides *Cruel*, to set other Peoples Mouths a watering, as if you were Cutting a Lemon. Further, 'tis indecent, to be alwayes slabbering, like a couple of Horses nabbing one another. Agen, it often times shows all things are not well behind the Curtain, when there's such a deal of Love before Folks. And last of all, there's danger least their Love should not last long, if they squander it away so fast at their first setting up. But to compare this Fondness of both Sexes, we think it seems worst in a *Man*, because there 'tis most unnatural, and looks like a *Woman with a Beard*, so very monstrous that all the Street points at him, whenever he appears; as they may easily do, for the World is not now much inclin'd to that Vice; and if the City it self be never Burnt again, unless for that Fault, 'tis like to stand just where it does 'till the last Conflagration.

Quest. 6. Why are Widdows more forward to Marry than Maids?

Answ. Because as the Widdow (we think) *Blackacre* has it, the young Fellows take it for granted, that 'tis nothing but — *Up and Ride* — and indeed almost *Rewish the Widdows into Matrimony*, if they have any Appurtenances worth Angling for. This for the Men's side — then for the Women's, to carry on the formention'd Metaphor — Whether o'th' two is the easier to mount, an *Old Pad-Hack* that has been beating upon the Road this Ten Year, or a young skittish Filly that was never backt before, but flouncing about like *Bucephalus*, when he stood in his own Light?

Quest. 7. How long after the Death of a Husband may Women modestly Marry?

Answ. We think that Pious Widdow was a little of the soonest, who when most deeply lamenting at her Husband's Funeral, and one of the Company at the Grave whisper'd her not to take on so heavily, for if she thought fit, he was ready to supply his room — Answer'd, sadly Sobbing, *Thank ye Sir, for your Care to Comfort a poor disconsolate Widdow*, but indeed I've just now Promis'd another that came before ye. The *Ephesian Matron* o'tother side was a little of the longest, tho' she made up for't afterwards, and was very much in Hast when she once set about the Business. Nor need we go so far as *Ephesus* for Ladies that have almost Worshipt their Husband's Tombs for seven Years together, after their Death, and at last express'd the *Extravagance* of their Love to their Memories by Marrying the *Tutor* of their Children. But might we propose a Term of Mourning in this Case, our Judgment is, that the *Widdows* Love is too warm, who tho' like the *Indian Wives* they don't burn themselves with their *Husbands*, are yet for as good as burying themselves alive to keep 'em Company — and o'tother side, that hers is too cold, who can scarce lie alone 'till her Husband is so. There is a mean betwixt 'em, and we think a Widdow does very well in mourning for one Twelve-month after she is so, both because 'tis

decent, and because she generally looks prettier in't, and twill the sooner get her another *Husband*.

Quest. 8. Whether it be lawful for a good Man to Marry his Daughter to one of a Vicious Life, but of a good Estate, rather than to one of a meaner Fortune, and an honest Man?

Answ. If it shou'd be lawful, we neither think it kind nor prudeni for him to do so, since his Daughter is likely to be Unhappier with the *Ridgill Man*, than with the other not in so good Circumstances, it truly Pious and Religious. — And indeed from hence it follows, that 'tis not lawfull, since he's oblig'd to do the best he can for those he has brought into the World, and is really faulty if he neglects it: Whereas on the other side, if he Marrys 'em to honest Men, they are both likely better and so richer *Husbands*, in both senscs of that Phrase, and can besides expect the Blessing of Heaven for 'em, which the others have no Title to.

Quest. 9. Whether it be better to Marry a Woman with a singular good Temper, and not truly Religious, or a Shrew of a crabbed Temper that is Religious?

Answ. For the first, there's Hopes of her, if she's of a good Temper, and that well manag'd, that she may improve, and by God's Mercy become truly Pious and Religious: Tho' if not, we believe even a good Man might live more comfortably with her than the other; since for her, if she be a true Scold, she'll only presume upon her Husband's goodness, who after all may be mistaken in her Piety, how much soe're she pretend to't; for tis certainly true of Woman as well as Man, if they bridle not their Tongue, all their Religion is vain.

The Paper about *Infant-Baptism* will be Publisht next Saturday.

The Question about *Dueling* is already Answered.

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WE have already told the World that there shall nothing pais in the *YOUNG STUDENTS LIBRARY*, but what shall be Revised by the whole ATHEIAN SOCIETY, and Amended and Enlarged by 'em, where there's any Occasion for it: And having already got a great Number of Subscriptions, and met with an UNIVERSAL ENCOURAGEMENT, (from all Impartial Persons) are resolved to put it into the Pres within these three Weeks at furthest, not in the least doubting but we shall have SUBSCRIBERS enough by that time — We here add, as a further Encouragement to Subscribers, that whatever we find Valuable in all the *UNIVERSAL BIBLIOTHEQUES* yet Publisht, (tho' not mention'd in our PROPOSALS) shall be add'd in the said Volume, all the Universal Bibliotheces being dearly Purchas'd and Enter'd in the Hall-Book by him who was the FIRST UNDERTAKER (they being No Foreigners Property when Translated into the English Tongue) long before any French-man came to Interlope with our Design: But his Interloping is but a Taste of his Morality, we shall therefore Print a larger Account thereof, with his Reasons for leaving Holland, yet unknown to the World, if he at any time Encroaches upon our Booksellers Property, or makes any more scurrilous Reflections: And after all, our Bookseller having (as is evident) Justice and Equity on his side, shall not want a Legal Satisfaction. The Reasons why we rejected his Assistance, when he SO proffer'd it to our Bookseller, is to be seen Merc. 3. Vol. 4. We ought further in Justice to tell the World, that some of those Extracts that the French-man has made for October are in our THIRD SUPPLEMENT, and others will be in the FOURTH, they being in the New Universal Bibliotheqe, freed from his Bigotry and Gallicisms; and that all the Valuable Books Printed either in England or elsewhere, from the Year 65. to this day, (and so on from time to time) shall be inserted in our Volume here Proposed, or else in our future Supplements or Appendixes: But for a further satisfaction in this Mater, read our PROPOSALS, which are to be had at the Raven in the Poultry.